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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, April 23, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Set-Up for Home Canning." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Listeners, would you like to carry on the canning conversation today? Would you like to take up from where we left off last week on that day when we started to list equipment for canning and got no farther than the containers -- spent all our time talking over glass jars versus tin cans?

With containers as a start, let's go ahead with the list of what a home canner needs for her job.

Perhaps I should tell you in advance that I have no intention of giving advice. I am only going to report. Far be it from me to dictate to competent housekeepers like my listeners the equipment they should use for canning or any other housekeeping job. But I thought you might like to check your own set-up with the list of equipment which workers at the Department of Agriculture have found most useful in their study of home canning.

First, about the canner itself. Maybe I should call it "the processing equipment." The processing equipment needed depends on the foods to be canned. If you are making just jelly, jam or marmalade, you need only a large kettle to cook it in. If you are canning acid foods -- that is, fruits and tomatoes -- you need a water-bath canner. But if you are putting up non-acid foods like most vegetables and meat and fish, then you need a steam pressure canner for safety.

By the way, no doubt you know that many home canners use a wash boiler or bucket for water-bath canning. Any vessel with a tight cover large enough to hold a convenient number of cans and also water to cover them 1 or 2 inches will do for canning fruits and tomatoes. Of course, such a container needs a rack inside to hold the jars away from the bottom and allow the water to circulate freely underneath. A wire basket makes a good rack and is also convenient for lifting a number of jars in and out of the canner at one time. Such a basket the man of the house can make out of wire fence meshing, or a tinner can make at small cost.

So the processing equipment for home canning, as listed by the canners at the Department of Agriculture, is simply a water-bath canner with a rack inside for fruits and tomatoes, and a steam pressure canner for non-acid foods like most vegetables and meat and fish. For jellies, jams and so on a large kettle is all that is necessary for the cooking.



Now to go on to the rest of the equipment for the canning job. I needn't mention except in passing that a work-table of comfortable height, and a sink, and a good supply of water go on the list. No home canner would disagree on that point, I'm sure. For washing fruits and vegetables, the Department workers list shallow pans, a colander, and a good brush.

The tools for preparing the vegetables include sharp paring knives, and a cutting knife and some good scissors. For canning on a large scale, certain other special tools save time and work -- devices for paring and coring, for example, or for pitting peaches and cherries, for shelling peas, or for slicing, cubing, grinding or sieving. Again, whether you need these tools or not, depends on what and how much you are canning.

For measuring and weighing, the articles on the list are: standard measuring cups, a quart measure, and household scales.

To take care of the hot food and the hot jars, you'll want a long-handled spoon, a ladle or dipper, a jar-funnel and jar-tongs.

If you are going to be really scientific and get accurate results, you'll also need a canning thermometer made for immersing in liquids. Such a thermometer should register at least to 220 degrees Fahrenheit. You can use a candy or dairy thermometer for this purpose. You can buy such thermometers from your local dealer for about a dollar.

Now if you happen to be canning for sale and must have your fruit come up to a State or Federal standard, then you will find a sugar tester or saccharometer very useful for measuring the concentration of sugar.

Last but not least on this list of home-canning equipment is accurate information on time and temperature and pressure and so on. The day for canning by guess has gone. So let me mention once again that you are welcome to the canning bulletin published by the Bureau of Home Economics at the Department of Agriculture. To get a copy all you have to do is to write to the Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., and ask for the bulletin called "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home." It is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1471. And it is free as long as the free supply holds out.

If you want further details about equipment, you'll find them in that same bulletin.

Maybe I should make one last point about the materials for your canning kettles. The Department workers say that aluminum or a good grade of enamelware or stainless steel are all satisfactory materials for cooking acid food. But they say that galvanized iron is not a safe material for the purpose. As you know, galvanized iron has a zinc covering. Acid foods take up this zinc and become poisonous.

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